Draft
Environmental Assessment

Wing Dam Fishing Access Site Acquisition and Development

May 1, 2007

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Wing Dam Fishing Access Site Acquisition and Development
Draft Environmental Assessment
MEPA, NEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of Proposed Action:

Development	___X___
Renovation	_____
Maintenance	_____
Land Acquisition	___X___
Equipment Acquisition	_____
Other (Describe)	_____

2. Agency authority for the proposed action: The 1977 Montana Legislature enacted statute 87-1-605 MCA, which directs Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) to acquire, develop, and operate a system of fishing accesses. The legislature established a funding account to ensure that this function would be accomplished. Sections 23-1-105, 23-1-106, 15-1-122, 61-3-321, and 87-1-303, MCA, authorize the collection fees and charges for the use of state park system units and fishing access sites, and contain rule-making authority for their use, occupancy, and protection. See Appendix 1 for HB 495 qualification.

2. Name of Project:
Wing Dam Fishing Access Site Acquisition and Development

3. Name, Address, and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:

Allan Kuser	Roger Semler
Fishing Access Site Coordinator	Regional Parks Manager
Montana FWP, HQ	Montana FWP, Region 4
PO Box 200701	4600 Giant Springs Road
Helena, MT 59620	Great Falls, MT 59405
406-444-7885	406-454-5859

4. If Applicable:
Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: Spring 2007
Estimated Completion Date: 2007
Current Status of Project Design (percentage complete): 10%

5. Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range, and township)

Wing Dam Fishing Access Site (FAS) is located on the Missouri River one mile north of Cascade, MT on frontage road. It is located at river mile 2166 on the left hand side as you float downstream, Township 18 North, Range 1 West, S ½ Section 24.

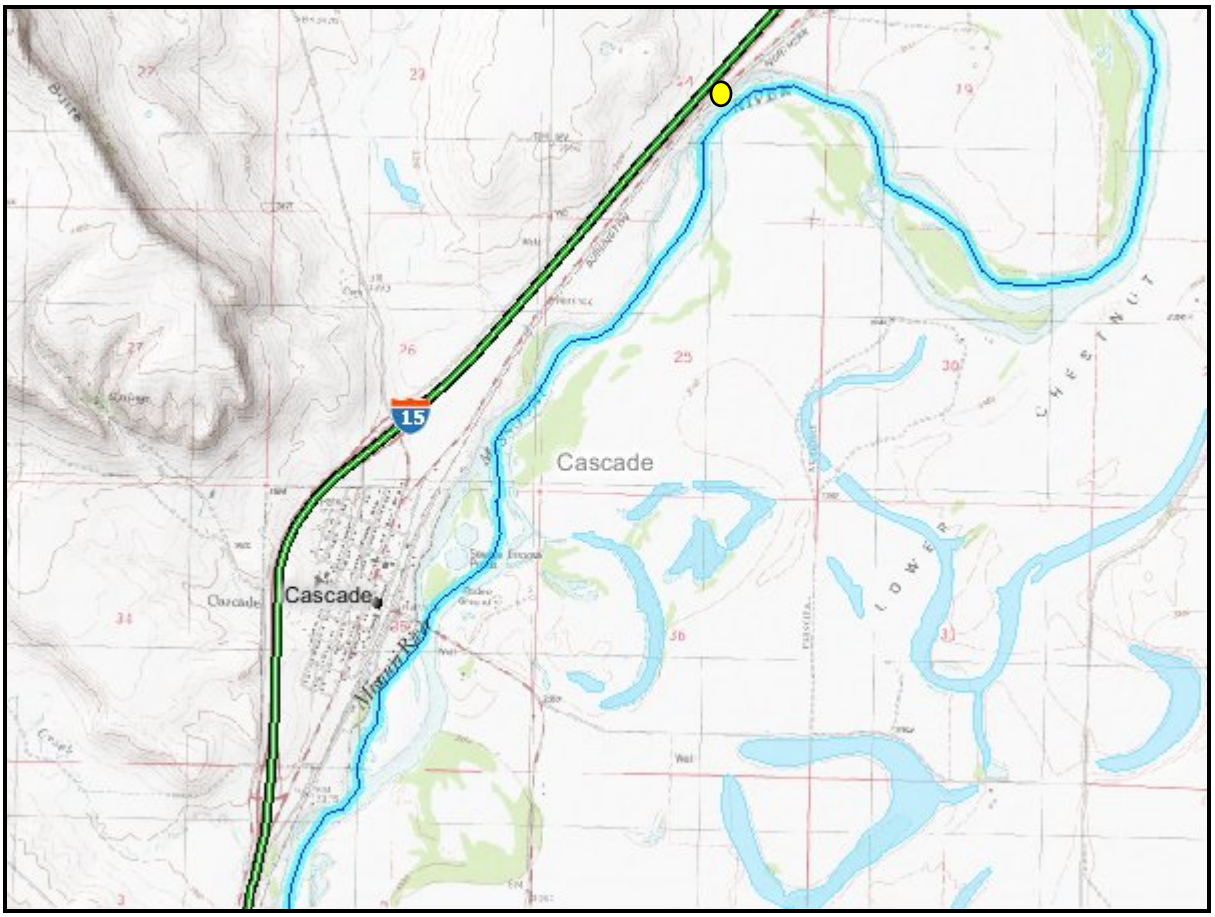

Figure 1: Yellow circle delineates location of Wing Dam FAS.

6. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

(a) Developed:
Residential ..... 0 acres
Industrial ..... 0 acres

(b) Open Space/Woodlands/
Recreation..... 22 acres

(c) Wetlands/Riparian
Areas..... 22 acres

(d) Floodplain..... 22 acres

(e) Productive:
irrigated cropland ..... 0 acres
dry cropland ..... 0 acres
forestry ..... 0 acres
rangeland ..... 0 acres
other ..... 0 acres

7. Map/site plan: attach an original 8 1/2" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.

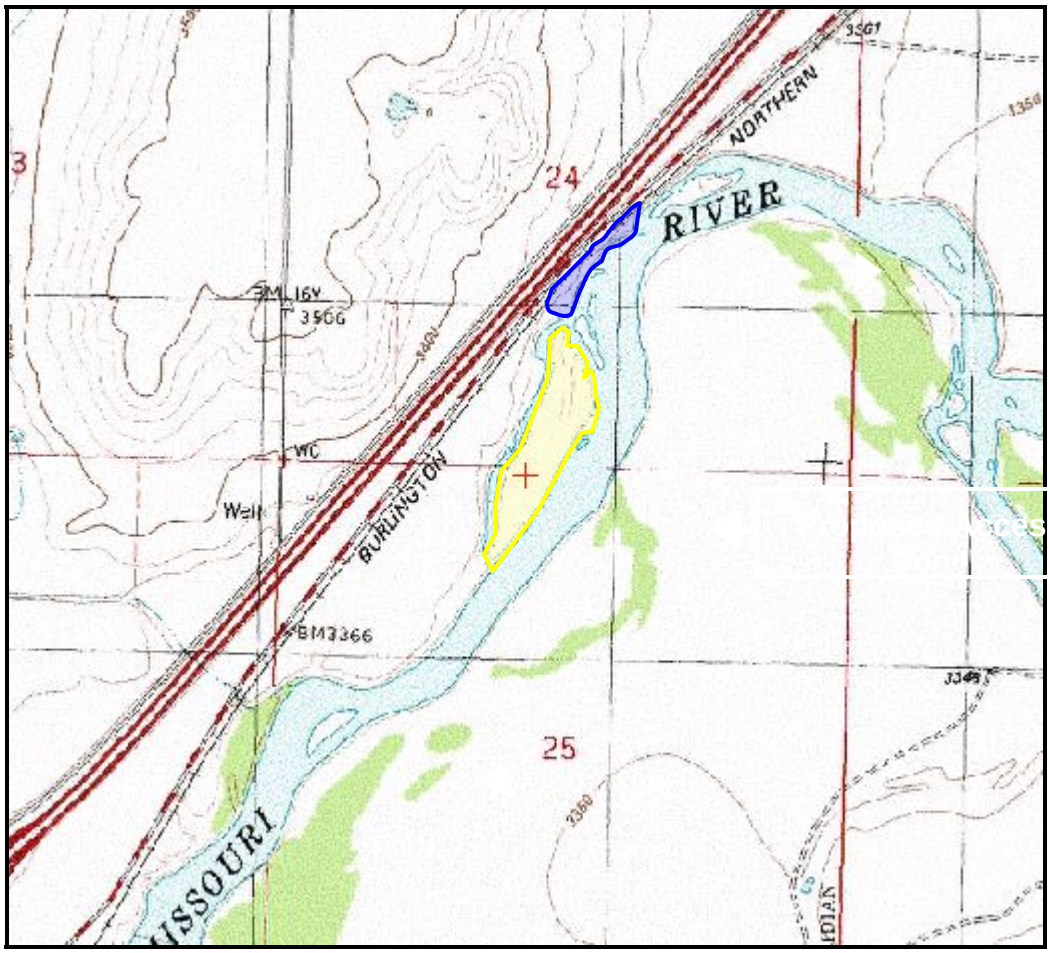

Figure 2: Topographic map depicting location of Wing Dam FAS and FWP proposed acquisition. Blue polygon (10 acres) delineates approximate boundary of Wing Dam FAS. Yellow polygon (22 acres) delineates approximate boundary of FWP acquisition for Wing Dam FAS. The base photo source is from Montana Natural Resources Information Service Topofinder.

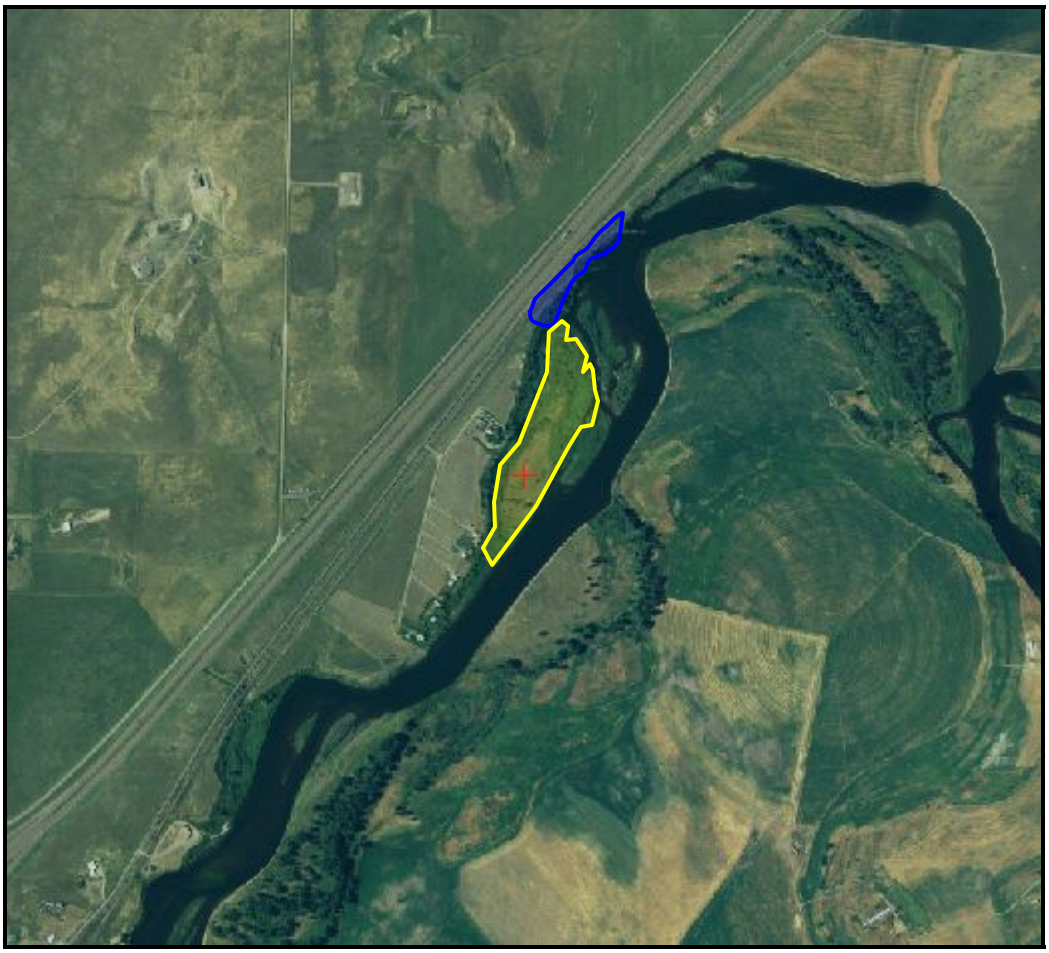

Figure 3: Aerial photograph depicting location of Wing Dam FAS and FWP proposed acquisition. Blue polygon (10 acres) delineates approximate boundary of Wing Dam FAS. Yellow polygon (22 acres) delineates approximate boundary of FWP acquisition for Wing Dam FAS. The base photo source is from Montana Natural Resources Information Service Topofinder.

8. Listing of any other Local, State, or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.

(a) Permits:

Agency Name	Permit	Date Filed/#
Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks	124	
Montana Department of Environmental Quality	318	
US Corps of Engineers	404	
Cascade County	Floodplain Permit	

(b) Funding:

Agency Name	Funding Amount
FWP FAS Acquisition Fund	Donation
FWP FAS Development	$10,000

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

Agency Name	Type of Responsibility

9. Narrative summary of the proposed action or project including the benefits and purpose of the proposed action.

Wing Dam Fishing Access Site Description and Background

Wing Dam Fishing Access Site is located approximately 1.7 miles upstream (north) of Cascade on the Missouri River at river mile 2166. The closest FWP FAS upstream is Pelican Point FAS at river mile 2176, and the closest FAS downstream is Dunes FAS at river mile 2147. The current FAS is 10 acres of grassland adjacent to the Missouri River. The FAS is located along the frontage road north of Cascade. Upstream of the site is the Willow Bend Subdivision. The Town of Cascade boat launch site is approximately two miles upstream.

Picture 1. Undeveloped parking area at Wing Dam FAS.

In 2003, an angler survey identified this section of the Missouri River (river mile 2099.5-2177.6) as the 31st most fished body of water in Montana. The regional rank was five and there were 20,368 days fished and 459 trips on this section. Fish species in this section of the Missouri River include brown trout, bullhead, burbot, carp, longnose suckers, mountain whitefish, pumpkin seeds, rainbow trout, stonecat, walleye, white suckers, and yellow perch.

Wing Dam FAS is a narrow strip of 10 acres between the Frontage Road and Missouri River. Due to its location between the railroad tracks and the river, the FAS has remained undeveloped. There is no sign marking the location of the FAS. There is a small parking area with no designated parking spots, and a bench (Picture 1). There are no facilities at the site and it is a day use only site. The site is mostly grassland with a few mature cottonwood trees. Along the shoreline, there are willows. The site is used primarily for shore angling, hiking, waterfowl hunting, and bird watching. Weeds present at the site include leafy spurge, spotted knapweed, dalmatian toadflax, and Canada thistle. FWP currently contracts with the Cascade County Weed Department for noxious weed control services. Herbicides, bio-control, and mowing are used where appropriate.

The FAS and proposed acquisition are within two bald eagle nesting territories. The nests are from adjacent territories and usually active each year. The nests are at least one-quarter mile from the FAS (and proposed acquisition), are on the opposite side of the Missouri River from the FAS (and proposed acquisition), and are located on private land. According to Graham Taylor (Region 4 Wildlife Manager), it is unlikely that the bald eagles would be disturbed by the proposed acquisition and development, as visitors to the FAS would not have access to this land. The cottonwood stands where each nest is located would help provide visual screening between the FAS and the eagle nests. If the proposed acquisition and development creates additional boating traffic past the nests, especially early in the nesting season before the trees leaf out, additional visual screening may be needed. Constructing a boat launch is not part of the proposed project. Any plans to construct a boat launch at this FAS would need to assess the impact on these bald eagles in a future Environmental Assessment.

Proposed Action, Purpose, and Benefits of the Action

Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks proposes to acquire Willow Bend Island (Pictures 2 and 3). This island is approximately 22 acres and is located adjacent to the south of Wing Dam FAS. Development at the site would include:

1. Improve parking lot,
2. Construct a gravel trail (approximately 300 yards) from the parking area to the riverbank (Picture 4),
3. Install standard FAS signage,
4. Install fencing to define property boundary.

Picture 2. Willow Bend Island can be seen in the background of this picture.

The Land Acquisition Transaction

Willow Bend Island would be donated to FWP through a private landowner. The property was appraised in September 2003 for $77,000. The island is mainly grasses and willows, with a few cottonwood trees. It is inhabited with numerous waterfowl, including Canada Geese and various duck species. It would be a beneficial acquisition to the public by offering more opportunity for fishing, waterfowl hunting, hiking, picnicking, and wildlife

viewing on the Missouri River.

Picture 3. Picture of Willow Bend Island taken from the west bank of the Missouri River.

Development and Maintenance of the Site

After acquisition of the property, FWP proposes to develop Wing Dam FAS. Development would be necessary to manage public access at the site. Signs would be installed to identify the site as a FAS. Fencing would also be installed to identify the boundaries. Signs and fences are necessary to allow recreationists to utilize the site and to prevent trespassing on to adjacent private land. The parking lot would be improved to allow for easier access into the site and increase parking at the site. The parking lot in its undeveloped state is not adequate for a developed FAS. A gravel trail would be constructed from the parking lot to the riverbank. This trail would confine recreationists to one location and would help prevent degradation of the site.

Picture 4. Slope of bank at Wing Dam FAS that the pedestrian trail would traverse.

The site would continue to be day use only, with no overnight camping permitted. Campfires would not be permitted at the site. At this time, there are no immediate plans to install a vault latrine; however, a standard concrete vault latrine may be installed later in the vicinity of the parking area. Lawful hunting will be permitted at the FAS. Due to the site's proximity to residential areas, hunting with rifles will be prohibited.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks currently assumes responsibility for routine maintenance of the site including litter pick up, refuse pick up, mowing, brushing, road maintenance, and general site upkeep. FWP contracts with Cascade County for weed maintenance. After acquisition and development, FWP would assume responsibility for sign installation and maintenance, fence maintenance, and trail maintenance. FWP contracts with Cascade County for weed maintenance and this would continue after the proposed project.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

1. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a comparison of the alternatives with the proposed action/preferred alternative:

Alternative A: No Action
Do not acquire the 22 acres of donated property for Wing Dam FAS, and do not develop Wing Dam FAS. The FAS would remain in its undeveloped state. Public access on the Missouri River in this area would be limited to the 10 acres currently located at Wing Dam FAS.

Alternative B: FWP Acquires Land—No Development
FWP would acquire a 22-acre island in the Missouri River through donation from a private landowner. This land is adjacent to the existing Wing Dam FAS. The acquired land would be managed in its undeveloped state as part of the Wing Dam FAS. No development would occur at this time. Acreage at Wing Dam FAS on the Missouri River for public recreation would increase.

Alternative C: FWP Acquires Land and Develops the FAS (preferred alternative)
The proposed project would be for FWP to acquire a 22-acre island in the Missouri River through donation from a private landowner and to develop Wing Dam FAS. Development at Wing Dam FAS would include installing standard FAS signage, improving the parking area, constructing a trail from the parking area to the riverbank, and installing fencing to delineate the boundary of the FAS. This development would allow FWP to manage public usage at the site. This acquisition and development would increase access to the Missouri River.

2. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

Developing the site and promoting public use could cause some conflict with the adjacent landowners. Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks would follow the guidelines of the good neighbor policy for public recreation lands (MCA 23-1-126.) to have “no impact upon adjoining private and public lands by preventing impact on those adjoining lands from noxious weeds, trespass, litter, noise and light pollution, streambank erosion and loss of privacy.”

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

The proposed project would minimally impact the physical environment. Best Management Practices (see Appendix 3) would be utilized to minimize impacts to the land and water during design and construction of the proposed project. To help minimize changes in drainage pattern and surface runoff caused by construction of the trail, a vegetative buffer would be left and the trail would be built down the riverbank in an area with gradual slope. Constructing the trail to the riverbank should help minimize disruption of bank and vegetation from increased public usage. Posted regulation signs and enforcement activities would help prevent activities that adversely impact wildlife and wildlife habitat.

The proposed project would minimally affect the human environment. The development at Wing Dam FAS has been kept to a minimum to prevent conflicts between visitors and homeowners. FWP will follow guidelines for the Good Neighbor Policy. To minimize noise levels access would be limited to daytime use only. The proposed project would not alter public services, taxes, or utilities. The proposed project would provide the public with more recreational opportunities, better services at the FAS, and the potential to increase visitor use and spending in area communities. Construction would not occur until the State Historic and Preservation Organization has confirmed that development at Wing Dam FAS would not affect cultural or historical resources.

PART IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any, and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

The public will be notified in the following ways to comment on the EA of for the Wing Dam Fishing Access Site Acquisition and Development

1. Legal notices will be published in the *Great Falls Tribune,* the Cascade *Courier*, and the *Helena Independent Record.*
2. Legal notice and the draft EA will be posted on the Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks web page: *http://fwp.mt.gov/publicnotices*
3. Direct notice will be given to adjacent landowners.
4. Draft EA's will be available at the Region 4 headquarters in Great Falls and the State headquarters in Helena.

This level of public involvement is appropriate for a project of this scale.

2. Duration of comment period, if any.

The public comment period will be 30 days. Comments must be received by 5:00 pm on May 30, 2007. Comments may be emailed to rsemler@mt.gov, or written comments may be sent to the following address:

Roger Semler
Regional Parks Manager
Montana FWP, Region 4
4600 Giant Springs Road
Great Falls, MT 59405
406-454-5859

PART V. EA PREPARATION

1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required?
NO
If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.

Based on an evaluation of impacts to the physical and human environment under MEPA, this environmental review revealed no significant negative impacts from the proposed action: therefore, an EIS is not necessary and an environmental assessment is the appropriate level of analysis.

2. Name, title, address and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:

Allan Kuser
FWP FAS Coordinator
1420 East Sixth Ave
Helena, MT 59601
(406) 444-7885

Roger Semler
FWP Regional Parks Manager
4600 Giant Springs Road
Great Falls, MT 59405
(406) 751-4550

Sally Schrank
Independent Contractor
1416 Winne Ave
Helena, MT 59601
(406) 443-3585

3. List of agencies consulted during preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Parks Division, Region 4
Wildlife Division, Region 4
Fisheries Division, Region 4
Lands Section

Montana Department of Commerce—Tourism
PO Box 200533
1424 9th Ave.
Helena, MT 59620-0533

Montana Natural Heritage Program—Natural Resources Information System
PO Box 201800
1515 East Sixth Avenue
Helena, MT 59620-1800

PART VI. MEPA CHECKLIST

Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. LAND RESOURCES **Will the proposed action result in:**	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?			X			1a.
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil which would reduce productivity or fertility?			X			1b.
c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?			X		Yes	1e.
f. Other		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

1a. The proposed project would not alter geologic substructure, and would minimally impact soil stability. The parking area and trail would be located in the 100-year flood plain area. Erosion is expected to be minor. Surface runoff should be minimal due to the low slope and the Rivra Gravelly Sandy Loam. The parking lot is located in an area of low slope and there is a railroad bed between the parking area and river. The trail would be built down the riverbank with a gradual slope. A vegetative buffer would be left to prevent erosion of the bank. Best Management Practices (see Appendix 3) would be utilized to minimize impacts during design and construction of the proposed project.

1b. The proposed project would cause minor erosion of the river bank due to the increased use by recreationists and the construction of a trail to the river. The trail would cause over-covering of soil, but should prevent erosion of the bank by confining recreationists to a stable location.

1e. Development at the FAS would increase the potential for unlawful campfires. Not permitting fires at the FAS, and posting and enforcing these regulations would mitigate this potential.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

2. AIR **Will the proposed action result in:**	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (also see 13 (c))			X			2a.
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a)		NA				
f. Other		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

2a. Minor amounts of dust would be temporarily created during improvement of the parking area and construction of the trail. Best Management Practices (see Appendix 3) would be utilized to minimize the dust during construction.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

3. WATER **Will the proposed action result in:**	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?			X		Yes	3a.
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			X		Yes	3b.
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of flood water or other flows?			X		Yes	See 3b.
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l.For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c)		NA				
m. For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a)		NA				
n. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

3a. The proposed project would cause a minor increase in the discharge of sediments into river during construction due to exposing soil for construction of the trail. This impact can be minimized by providing a vegetative buffer zone during and after construction.

3b. There is a railroad bed between the parking area and Missouri River. This railroad bed would prevent the parking area improvements from causing changes in drainage pattern and surface runoff to the river. Construction of the trail may cause changes in drainage pattern and surface runoff to the river. A vegetative buffer would be left to trap sediments.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

4. VEGETATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X			4a.
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				4c.
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			X		Yes	4e.
f. For P-R/D- J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		NA				
g. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

4a. Approximately one acre of grassland would be removed to construct the trail. This trail would prevent degradation at the site and contain recreationists to one location.

4c. The Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) located square-stem monkeyflower (*Mimulus ringens*) within one-mile of the FAS (written communication dated December 11, 2006). This species is listed as sensitive by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (USBLM) and S1/G5 by MNHP. This ranking by MNHP indicates the species is at high risk of extirpation in the state and common globally. The location of the plant was approximately 0.75 miles downstream of the FAS and only one plant was found in 2000.

4e. Weeds are present at the FAS including spotted knapweed, leafy spurge, dalmatian toadflax, and Canada thistle. Increased public access at the FAS would likely increase weeds. FWP would follow the Region 4 Weed Management Plan and would continue to contract with the Cascade County Weed Department to manage this problem.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

5. FISH/WILDLIFE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?			X			5b.
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?			X			See 5b.
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				5f.
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?		X				
h. For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f)		NA				
i. For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d)		NA				
j. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

5b. The Wing Dam FAS has not been developed in the past and the proposed acquisition has not had access. The proposed project would increase public usage and access on the Missouri River. The island will not be developed. Lawful hunting and fishing would be permitted at the FAS and this would displace and disperse wildlife, change nesting activities, and cause death from hunting. Primary species to be hunted are waterfowl, which are typically migratory up and down the Missouri River Corridor. Hunting would be an added public benefit and would cause a reduction in waterfowl numbers by hunter harvest. These impacts are minor and considered beneficial to the public. Posted regulation signs and enforcement activities would help prevent activities that adversely impact wildlife habitat. Wildlife (game and nongame) in the area would be impacted by the proposed project.

5f. The MNHP reported bald eagles within one mile of the FAS (written communication date December 11, 2006). Bald eagles are listed as threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Forest Service, as special status by USBLM, and as S3/G5 by MNHP. This ranking by MNHP indicates the bald eagles are potentially at risk of extirpation statewide and common globally. The FAS and proposed acquisition are within two bald eagle nesting territories. The nests are from adjacent territories and usually active each year. The nests are at least one-quarter mile from the FAS (and proposed acquisition), are on the opposite side of the Missouri River from the FAS (and proposed acquisition), and are located on private land. It is unlikely that the bald eagles would be disturbed by the proposed acquisition and development, as visitors to the FAS would not have access to this land. Hunting is not expected to cause impacts to the nests, as eaglets would have fledged by the time hunting activities occur at the site. The cottonwood stands where each nest is located would help provide visual screening between the

FAS and the eagle nests. If the proposed acquisition and development creates additional boating traffic past the nests, especially early in the nesting season before the trees leaf out, additional visual screening may be needed. Constructing a boat launch is not part of the proposed project. Any plans to construct a boat launch at this FAS would need to assess the impact on these bald eagles in a future EA.

B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X		Yes	6a.
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

6a. An increase in existing noise levels would occur with increased public use of the FAS, due to vehicle traffic, recreationists, and hunting activities at the FAS. The proposed development of the FAS has been kept to a minimum to prevent any major problems between visitors and adjacent landowners. Access to the FAS would be limited to daytime use only. FWP would follow the guidelines of the good neighbor policy for public recreation lands (MCA 23-1-126.) to have “no impact upon adjoining private and public lands by preventing impact on those adjoining lands from noxious weeds, trespass, litter, noise and light pollution, streambank erosion and loss of privacy.”

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

7. LAND USE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?			X			7d.
e. Other: _____		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

7d. The development of the FAS has been kept to a minimum to prevent conflicts between visitors and adjacent landowners. To minimize conflicts the FAS would be limited to daytime use only. FWP would follow the guidelines of the good neighbor policy for public recreation lands (MCA 23-1-126.).

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

8. RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?			X		Yes	8a.
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. For P-R/D-1, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)		NA				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

8a. The FWP Region 4 Weed Management Plan calls for an integrated method of managing weeds, including the use of herbicides. The use of herbicides would comply with Montana Department of Agriculture application guidelines and conducted by licensed applicators trained in safe handling techniques. Weeds would also be controlled using mechanical or biological means in certain areas to reduce the risk of chemical spills or water contamination.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				
f. Other:		X				9f.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

9f. The attached tourism report (Appendix 3) suggests that the community of Cascade may benefit from increased public use if the site improvements are implemented as described.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify: _____		X				10a.
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				10b.
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased used of any energy source?		X				
e. Define projected revenue sources						10e.
f. Define projected maintenance costs.						10f
g. Other:_____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

10a. There will be maintenance responsibilities associated with the proposed project, but FWP will assume all responsibility and integrate maintenance of this site in its existing FAS maintenance schedule.

10b. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks pays taxes “in a sum equal to the amount of taxes which would be payable on county assessment were it taxable to a private citizen” (MCA 87-1-603). Therefore, there would be no impact on the local tax base caused by this action.

10e. The proposed project would not generate revenue

10f. It would cost up to $1,500 per year for FWP to operate the site and maintain parking area, trail, fences, signs, weeds, and grounds.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

11. AESTHETICS/RECREATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)			X			11c.
d. For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c)		NA				
e. Other:		NA				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

11c. The proposed project would increase public access to the Missouri River and would improve services at the Wing Dam FAS which could benefit the tourism economy in the area. This proposed project would improve the quality of opportunities and settings at this undeveloped FAS with the addition of access to Willow Bend Island and additional sections of the Missouri River that were not accessible from Wing Dam FAS. Improving the parking area and trails would assist in resource management. Please see Appendix 3, Tourism Report.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

12. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric, historic, or paleontological importance?	X					12a.
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? **Attach SHPO letter of clearance.** (Also see 12.a)		NA				
e. Other:						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

12a. Prior to development, The State Historic and Preservation Office would be contacted to identify any historic or cultural resources at the site.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e)		NA				
g. For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		NA				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

APPENDIX 1
HB495
PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST

Date January 15, 2007 **Person Reviewing** Sally Schrank

Project Location: Wing Dam Fishing Access Site is located on the Missouri River one mile north of Cascade, MT on frontage road. It is located at river mile 2166 on the left hand side as you float downstream. Willow Bend Island (22 acres) is located adjacent to the FAS to the South. Township 18 North, Range 1 West, N ½ Section 25 and S ½ Section 24.

Description of Proposed Work: FWP proposes to acquire a 22-acre island (Willow Bend Island) in the Missouri River through donation from a private landowner and develop Wing Dam FAS. Development at the site would include installing standard FAS signage, improving the parking area, constructing a gravel trail from the parking area to the riverbank (approximately 300 yards), and installing fencing to delineate boundary of FAS.

The following checklist is intended to be a guide for determining whether a proposed development or improvement is of enough significance to fall under HB 495 rules. (Please check _ all that apply and comment as necessary.)

[Y] A. New roadway or trail built over undisturbed land?
Comments: A gravel trail would be constructed, approximately 300 yards long.

[ ] B. New building construction (buildings <100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?
Comments:

[ ] C. Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater?
Comments:

[ ] D. New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 25% or more?
Comments:

[ ] E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a doublewide boat ramp or handicapped fishing station?
Comments:

[ ] F. Any new construction into lakes, reservoirs, or streams?
Comments:

[ ] G. Any new construction in an area with National Registry quality cultural artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?
Comments:

10/99sed

[ ] H. Any new above ground utility lines?

Comments:

[ ] I. Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?

Comments:

[ ] J. Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern; including effects of a series of individual projects?

Comments:

If any of the above are checked, HB 495 rules apply to this proposed work and should be documented on the MEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST. Refer to MEPA/HB495 Cross Reference Summary for further assistance.

APPENDIX 2
TOURISM REPORT
MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA)/HB495

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks has initiated the review process as mandated by HB495 and the Montana Environmental Policy Act in its consideration of the project described below. As part of the review process, input and comments are being solicited. Please complete the project name, project description portions, and submit this form to:

Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Development Coordinator
Travel Montana-Department of Commerce
PO Box 200533
1424 9th Ave.
Helena, MT 59620-0533

Project Name: Wing Dam Fishing Access Site Acquisition and Development

Project Description: Wing Dam Fishing Access Site (10 acres) is located on the Missouri River one mile north of Cascade, MT on frontage road. It is located at river mile 2166 on the left hand side as you float downstream. Willow Bend Island (22 acres) is located adjacent to the FAS to the South. Township 18 North, Range 1 West, N ½ Section 25 and S 1/2 Section 24. FWP proposes to acquire a 22-acre island (Willow Bend Island) in the Missouri River through donation from a private landowner and develop Wing Dam FAS. Development at the site would include installing standard FAS signage, improving the parking area, constructing a gravel trail from the parking area to the riverbank (approximately 300 yards), and installing fencing to delineate boundary of FAS. This development is appropriate for the size of the FAS and location of the FAS. This acquisition and development would increase access to the Missouri River for recreationists.

1. Would this site development project have an impact on the tourism economy?
   NO **YES** If YES, briefly describe:

The project description suggests that public access and services at the Wing Dam FAS will be improved which should benefit the tourism economy in the area. Also providing public access to Willow Bend Island and its 22 acres should provide benefits and expand public access to this section of the Missouri River. Whether Willow Bend Island is managed for day-use or overnight camping, its addition to this FAS area should provide benefits.

2. Does this impending improvement alter the quality or quantity of recreation/tourism opportunities and settings?
   NO **YES** If YES, briefly describe:

This project improves the quality of opportunities and settings at this undeveloped FAS with the addition of access to Willow Bend Island and additional sections of the Missouri River that were not accessible before. Improving the parking area and trails will assist in resource management. Not having a latrine at this site is a concern if you are inviting

public use.

Signature: Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Development, Montana Commerce Dept.
Date: 1-22-07

APPENDIX 3

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS
BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR FISHING ACCESS SITES
10-02-02

I. ROADS

A. Road Planning and location

1. Minimize the number of roads constructed at the FAS through comprehensive road planning and recognizing foreseeable future uses.

2. Use existing roads, unless use of such roads would cause or aggravate an erosion problem.

3. Fit the road to the topography by locating roads on natural benches and following natural contours. Avoid long, steep road grades and narrow canyons.

4. Locate roads on stable geology, including well-drained soils and rock formations that tend to dip into the slope. Avoid slumps and slide-prone areas characterized by steep slopes, highly weathered bedrock, clay beds, concave slopes, hummocky topography, and rock layers that dip parallel to the slope. Avoid wet areas, including seeps, wetlands, wet meadows, and natural drainage channels.

5. Minimize the number of stream crossings.

6. Choose stable stream crossing sites. "Stable" refers to streambanks with erosion-resistant materials and in hydrologically safe spots.

B. Road Design

1. Design roads to the minimum standard necessary to accommodate anticipated use and equipment. The need for higher engineering standards can be alleviated through proper road-use management. "Standard" refers to road width.

2. Design roads to minimize disruption of natural drainage patterns. Vary road grades to reduce concentrated flow in road drainage ditches, culverts, and on fill slopes and road surfaces.

C. Drainage from Road Surface

1. Provide adequate drainage from the surface of all permanent and temporary roads. Use outsloped, insloped or crowned roads, installing proper drainage features. Space road drainage features so peak flow on road surface or in ditches will not exceed their capacity.

a. Outsloped roads provide means of dispersing water in a low-energy flow from the road surface. Outsloped roads are appropriate when fill slopes are stable, drainage will not flow directly into stream channels, and transportation safety can be met.

b. For in-sloped roads, plan ditch gradients steep enough, generally greater than 2%, but less than 8%, to prevent sediment deposition and ditch erosion. The steeper gradients may be suitable for more stable soils; use the lower gradients for less stable soils.

c. Design and install road surface drainage features at adequate spacing to control erosion; steeper gradients require more frequent drainage features. Properly constructed drain dips can be an economical method of road surface drainage. Construct drain dips deep enough into the subgrade

so that traffic will not obliterate them.

2. For ditch relief/culverts, construct stable catch basins at stable angles. Protect the inflow end of crossdrain culverts from plugging and armor if in erodible soil. Skewing ditch relief culverts 20 to 30 degrees toward the inflow from the ditch will improve inlet efficiency.

3. Provide energy dissipators (rock piles, slash, log chunks, etc.) where necessary to reduce erosion at outlet of drainage features. Crossdrains, culverts, water bars, dips, and other drainage structures should not discharge onto erodible soils or fill slopes without outfall protection.

4. Route road drainage through adequate filtration zones, or other sediment-settling structures. Install road drainage features above stream crossings to route discharge into filtration zones before entering a stream.

D. Construction/Reconstruction

1. Stabilize erodible, exposed soils by seeding, compacting, riprapping, benching, mulching, or other suitable means.

2. At the toe of potentially erodible fill slopes, particularly near stream channels, pile slash in a row parallel to the road to trap sediment. When done concurrently with road construction, this is one method to effectively control sediment movement and it provides an economical way of disposing of roadway slash. Limit the height, width, and length of these "slash filter windows" so not to impede wildlife movement. Sediment fabric fences or other methods may be used if effective.

3. Construct cut and fill slopes at stable angles to prevent sloughing and subsequent erosion.

4. Avoid incorporating potentially unstable woody debris in the fill portion of the road prism. Where possible, leave existing rooted trees or shrubs at the toe of the fill slope to stabilize the fill.

5. Place debris, overburden, and other waste materials associated with construction and maintenance activities in a location to avoid entry into streams. Include these waste areas in soil stabilization planning for the road.

6. When using existing roads, reconstruct only to the extent necessary to provide adequate drainage and safety; avoid disturbing stable road surfaces. Consider abandoning existing roads when their use would aggravate erosion.

E. Road Maintenance

1. Grade road surfaces only as often as necessary to maintain a stable running surface and to retain the original surface drainage.

2. Maintain erosion control features through periodic inspection and maintenance, including cleaning dips and crossdrains, repairing ditches, marking culvert inlets to aid in location, and clearing debris from culverts.

3. Avoid cutting the toe of cut slopes when grading roads, pulling ditches, or plowing snow.

4. Avoid using roads during wet periods if such use would likely damage the road drainage features. Consider gates, barricades, or signs to limit use of roads during wet periods.

II. RECREATIONAL FACILITIES (parking areas, campsites, trails, ramps, restrooms)

A. Site Design

1. Design a site that best fits the topography, soil type, and stream character, while minimizing soil disturbance and economically accomplishing recreational objectives. Keep roads and parking lots at least 50 feet from water; if closer, mitigate with vegetative buffers as necessary.

2. Locate foot trails to avoid concentrating runoff and provide breaks in grade as needed. Locate trails and parking areas away from natural drainage systems and divert runoff to stable areas. Limit the grade of trails on unstable, saturated, highly erosive, or easily compacted soils

3. Scale the number of boat ramps, campsites, parking areas, bathroom facilities, etc. to be commensurate with existing and anticipated needs. Facilities should not invite such use that natural features will be degraded.

4. Provide adequate barriers to minimize off-road vehicle use

B. Maintenance: Soil Disturbance and Drainage

1. Maintenance operations minimize soil disturbance around parking lots, swimming areas and campsites, through proper placement and dispersal of such facilities or by reseeding disturbed ground. Drainage from such facilities should be promoted through proper grading.

2. Maintain adequate drainage for ramps by keeping side drains functional or by maintaining drainage of road surface above ramps or by crowning (on natural surfaces).

3. Maintain adequate drainage for trails. Use mitigating measures, such as water bars, wood chips, and grass seeding, to reduce erosion on trails.

4. When roads are abandoned during reconstruction or to implement site-control, they must be reseeded and provided with adequate drainage so that periodic maintenance is not required.

III. RAMPS AND STREAM CROSSINGS

A. Legal Requirements

1. Relevant permits must be obtained prior to building bridges across streams or boat ramps. Such permits include the SPA 124 permit, the COE 404 permit, and the DNRC Floodplain Development Permit.

B. Design Considerations

1. Placement of boat ramp should be such that boats can load and unload with out difficulty and the notch in the bank where the ramp was placed does not encourage bank erosion. Extensions of boat ramps beyond the natural bank can also encourage erosion.

2. Adjust the road grade or provide drainage features (e.g. rubber flaps) to reduce the concentration of road drainage to stream crossings and boat ramps. Direct drainage flow through an adequate filtration zone and away from the ramp or crossing through the use of gravel side-drains, crowning (on natural surfaces) or 30-degree angled grooves on concrete ramps.

3. Avoid unimproved stream crossings on permanent streams. On ephemeral streams, when a culvert or bridge is not feasible, locate drive-throughs on a stable, rocky portion of the stream channel.

4. Unimproved (non-concrete) ramps should only be used when the native soils are sufficiently gravelly or rocky to withstand the use at the site and to resist erosion.

C. Installation of Stream Crossings and Ramps

1. Minimize stream channel disturbances and related sediment problems during construction of road and installation of stream crossing structures. Do not place erodible material into stream channels. Remove stockpiled material from high water zones. Locate temporary construction bypass roads in locations where the stream course will have a minimal disturbance. Time construction activities to protect fisheries and water quality.

2. Where ramps enter the stream channel, they should follow the natural streambed in order to avoid changing stream hydraulics and to optimize use of boat trailers.

3. Use culverts with a minimum diameter of 15 inches for permanent stream crossings and cross drains. Proper sizing of culverts may dictate a larger pipe and should be based on a 50-year flow recurrence interval. Install culverts to conform to the natural streambed and slope on all perennial streams and on intermittent streams that support fish or that provide seasonal fish passage. Place culverts slightly below normal stream grade to avoid culvert outfall barriers. Do not alter stream channels upstream from culverts, unless necessary to protect fill or to prevent culvert blockage. Armor the inlet and/or outlet with rock or other suitable material where needed.

4. Prevent erosion of boat ramps and the affected streambank through proper placement (so as to not catch the stream current) and hardening (rip-rap or erosion resistant woody vegetation).

5. Maintain a 1-foot minimum cover for culverts 18-36 inches in diameter, and a cover of one-third diameter for larger culverts to prevent crushing by traffic.